

# BRADFORD FAMILY

(ARTICLE WRITTEN BY G. BRADFORD)

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## A COUGH AND WHERE IT LED

By Gershom Bradford

Captain Gamaliel Bradford (1763-1825) built the stately Bittinger-Kriegel home on Tremont St. He had a daughter who married Seth Ames. Some of their descendants, in recent years, took root in the old town, much to the benefit of Duxbury. Seth Ames had a son, Pelham, who as a naval officer in the Civil War, became involved in a story of the sea:

Let us start down in the State of Maine. There in the early or middle 1830's, the much-traveled Wood family had a young woman described as being of notable beauty whose hair, when standing, touched the floor, but she had a persistent cough.

This affliction worried her family. It was decided that a sea voyage, was the best though drastic treatment. Helpfully her older brother, or was it her uncle, was a pioneering doctor in the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands. With this as an incentive, Charlotte Augusta Wood took in the ship Hellepont, Captain Little of Nantucket for the long journey around the Horn. There was another passenger, William Hooper, a young man of much energy and some capital. Usually such a long trip proves monotonous for the passengers. Not so in the cabin of the Hellepont: Both Captain Little and Mr. Hooper fell in love with Charlotte Wood. (We have found no further reference to the cough).

Arriving in Honolulu, Captain Little married Charlotte and Mr. Hooper proceeded to establish the sugar industry in the Islands. Sadly for the Littles the marriage was short-lived. In 2 years the

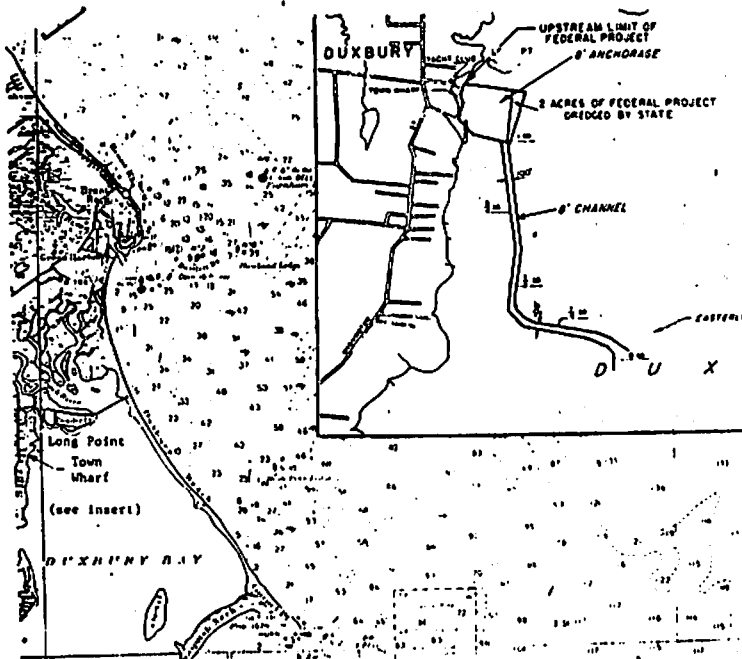
### A COUGH

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Captain was lost at sea, leaving Charlotte with a baby girl. The mother's situation was awkward, but we may assume that Dr. Wood looked after her. His responsibilities did not last long, for after a discreet interval, Mr. Hooper appeared above Charlotte's horizon. He assumed all her cares and burdens -- her name becoming Charlotte Augusta Wood Hooper and the daughter Augusta Wood Hooper.

There were more problems in starting the sugar industry than Mr. Hooper anticipated. The delivery of machinery by sailing ship was delaying and unsatisfactory. Then the native Kanakas who had lived for generations on the bounties of Nature, could not see why they should labor in the fields to sweeten the lives of some distant people. So, Mr. Hooper abandoned his project for others to follow. He was still alert for opportunity and hearing that California was beginning to stir, he sailed for San Francisco. It was not long before he had established a bank. It prospered and he sent for his family, bought a house on Taylor St., which became the Hooper home for over 50 years.

The discovery of gold sent the city into a frenzy of activity. The English, always looking for business opportunities, were in San Francisco and Barclay and company of London, liking the manner in which Hooper's bank was run, bought it making him the manager.



Geodetic map of area to be dredged this spring by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Hooper was a man of Puritanic habits. He disliked ostentation and extravagance, the hospitality at Taylor St. was generous but sedate. The ladies, the daughter growing up, knowing which side of their bread needed the butter, were demure. Barclay and Company expected Hooper to make periodic trips to London reporting on conditions in California. No sooner had his ship disappeared below the horizon then the dinner parties took on a higher key. Hooper was inconsistent for when he returned he brought his ladies the latest garments of London and beautiful jewelry. What did he expect them to do with it? They knew well. In that high flying city of the 1850's the every day currency was gold. The story has come down to us that the affluent ladies of the social set - the Hoopers among them - used to occupy the front rows of the opera house. On those occasions when the great divas visited San Francisco their enthusiasm boiled over, showering gold coins at the prima donna's feet. It was said that the climax came at a concert by Adelina Patti when jewelry fell amidst the rolling coins.

This undulating life of crests and troughs at Taylor St. could not go on forever. We are in a world of change where sorrow compensates for joy -- Hooper died.

Charlotte and Augusta lived on in a quieter and steadier manner until the Civil War brought another change. A naval cruiser anchored in the bay. Among the officers was Pelham Ames of Boston. He met Augusta, they fell in love and married. Relieved of duty, he persuaded his ladies to move East. It was not successful. The chill of the climate and, for them, the staid society made them homesick for California. They all eventually returned to Taylor St. Upstairs in her quarters Charlotte Hooper dressed formally each afternoon, serving tea to old friends who dropped in -- the grand dame to the end.

The Ames family lived on until the old home of so many vicissitudes was destroyed by the great earthquake. In 1916, only several months apart, they died.